

June 25, 1850

Woodville

THREE DOLLARS A YEAR, IF PAID IN ADVANCE:

BY JOHN S. HOLT, JR.

WOODVILLE

LETTER FROM THE HON. JEFFERSON DAVIS.

To the Washington Union.

GENTLEMEN: In your paper of this morning I find a letter which, because of its special reference to myself, and still more because of the source from which it emanates, claims from me a notice. For this purpose I ask the use of your columns, so that the reply and the correspondence to which it relates, may go to the public through the same channel. I refer to the letter of the Hon. Robert J. Walker, whose name and fame are closely and honorably associated with the constituency I represent, and whose opinions are of high authority throughout our whole country.

To all that is said—beautifully and forcibly said in favor of our constitutional Union—to every appeal to fraternal feeling, to mutual forbearance and concession—no heart responds more promptly and fully than my own. But my judgment halts at the point where he commences the application of these patriotic sentiments to the social "compromise bill" now under discussion in the United States Senate. The constitution of the United States, and the will of my constituents, are lights by which I endeavor soberly and conscientiously to examine every political subject upon which it becomes my duty to act. These are concentrated to burning brilliancy upon the question of the equal rights of the South as of the North to possess and enjoy the territory belonging to the States of the Union, and with every species of property to migrate to it, without any discrimination injurious to the one, or favorable to the other. Has this been enjoyed in California? is it now secured? If not, in what consists the compromise, which, it is said, characterizes the Union, and is marked on our constitution, from the appeal of Franklin in favor of conference and concession, to the close of Madison's record of the debates of the convention which formed the constitution of our Union?

I am told that the Union is in danger, and I am called to the rescue. That summons has been long since received from other quarters, and answered in the spirit of self-sacrifice, of fraternal forbearance, and mutual concession. Time and again have I announced, that to close this conflict of irreconcilable opinion, I was willing to adhere to the compromise line which, acquiescence of the States, had acquired a validity Congress could not give, and lessening to each all which price of opinion could not yield—to divide the territory between the rival claimants, by extending the old line of the Missouri and Texas compromise to the Pacific ocean. Heretofore this compromise had unequivocally operated against the South: now, for the first time it is a two-sided question, and lo! the North reject it. Who, then, displays uncompromising, ultra, or selfish temper in this controversy? Who, if this Union rests upon the constitution, with all its compromises, limitations, and guarantees, best conduces to its perpetuity—he who resolutely maintains the equality of the State, and of the rights and privileges, and immunities of all the citizens thereof, or he who surrenders to the aggressive spirit of a section.

Together with other Southern Senators, I have sought to amend the bill, and strip it of those features which are violative of that constitutional equality. I have not found any evidence of that much lauded spirit of compromise in the provisions of the bill, and, if it passes without material amendments, can anticipate only evil as its ultimate result. Under such convictions, and when, as one of a minority, I was struggling for what I believed to be essential to the Union, and necessary to those whom I immediately represent, it was with no common regret that I saw one, so long respected and so much admired, throw his name into the scale against us, coming forward as a volunteer to support, by his potential influence, the bill as it is. Nay, more: he invokes to his aid the name of our lamented friend, the late President of the United States. In answer to the supposition that Mr. Polk would have given this "compromise" his cordial support, I will quote from the special message of that statesman in relation to the Oregon territorial bill.

After referring to the Missouri compromise and the happy consequences which resulted from it, and the renewal of the compromise as applied to Texas, he says:

The territory of Oregon lies far north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes—the Missouri and Texas compromise line. Its southern boundaries is the parallel of 42 degrees, leaving the intermediate distance to be three hundred and thirty geographical miles. And it is because the provisions of this bill are not inconsistent with the laws of the Missouri compromise, if extended from the Rio Grande to the Pacific ocean, that I have not felt at liberty to withhold my sanction. Had it embraced Territories south of that compromise, the question presented for my consideration would have been of a far different character, and my action upon it must have corresponded with my convictions.

The people of Oregon, without authority from Congress, organized a provisional government, and in their fundamental law excluded slavery. Congress organized a territorial government out of this provisional government, and gave validity to their laws, thus, indirectly, through the agency of the provisional government of Oregon, prohibiting slavery in that territory. This received the executive sanction, as will be seen by the extract above, and from other parts of the same message, because it did not violate the Missouri and Texas compromise.

The people of California have, without authority from Congress, organized a government, formed a constitution, and enacted laws; they have prohibited slavery, and the prohibition applies to the country south of 36 degrees 30 minutes; and the question now is of that different character which we were told by the late President would have required from him a different action from that of the Oregon bill.

I have elsewhere explained, when it was questioned, the understanding I had of the President's motive for signing that Oregon bill, though I never approved of the decision. I honored the motive, as it was stated to me, by which he was prompted, and have endeavored to save his "administration from the obliquity" which its enemies have sought to attach to the act.

Readily admitting the more thorough acquaintance with the views and opinions of the late President which Mr. Walker possesses, it only remains to me to hope that upon reconsideration, he will abandon the supposition that Mr. Polk would have signed such a bill as this we now have under consideration. If I am wrong in the belief that he would have maintained against any and all influences the spirit of the Missouri compromise, then I have been wrong in the only defence I have ever found in any degree acceptable to the democracy of Mississippi, when I have opposed the measure which many bestowed upon his sanction of the Oregon territorial bill. It was not my intention to discuss the merits of Mr. Clay's bill: that I may have to do in my place as a Senator. Here I wish only to reply to an appeal so made, as to put me in a false position, and made by one against whose authority it is to me disagreeable to be opposed. Very truly, your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

MR. DAVIS SPEECH.

We take the following eloquent and true extracts from the speech of Senator Jefferson Davis, on the occasion of presenting to the Senate the action of Mississippi on the slavery question:

"Mr. President, these injuries, positive and negative—these offences against their pride and sensibility—these intrusions upon their domestic relations—these infringements upon their State rights, increasing from year to year in offensiveness, and the strength by which they are sustained—have excited the feeling manifested in the State of Mississippi. But, sir, we have been asked, and asked, too, in the Senate, if this Nashville Convention does not meet for purposes of disunion, why does it meet at all? Mr. President, have we reached that point in the history of our Government when aggression is sanctioned by numbers, and redress can only be obtained by force?—when citizens cannot peaceably assemble in convention with other hopes and other prospects than disunion? Sir, this Nashville Convention was founded in the confidence which the people of Mississippi, so far as they recommended it, had in the patriotism, the good morals, and good sense of the North. It was found in the expectation that the masses of the South could speak to the masses of the North, and gain their attention for useful purposes. It was founded in the hope that fraternity was not yet dead, and regard for the constitution not yet wholly obliterated among the people, however far politicians may have gone astray. Those who believe that this faith was unjust and this hope was vain, may well ask us, if not assembled there for purposes of disunion, why do we assemble? When those who believe this confidence in the patriotism and fraternity of our co-States of the Union to be unfounded, ask such a question, no answer can be given which to them would be satisfactory."

After recapitulating the California question, and showing the wrongs done to the South, Mr. Davis concludes in this manner. Let every Mississippiian read it:

"The people of Mississippi exercise their right peaceably to assemble—a right which Great Britain denied to our forefathers, and which denial, more than any other one cause, led to the war of the Revolution, which gave independence to these United States. They peaceably assembled. They considered their grievances. They have invited others like themselves, to meet them in consultation upon the subject of providing appropriate remedies. They have not sought by force of arms, nor by force of numbers, to violate the constitution, or infringe the rights of others. Far from it. They have sought by public opinion, and by a frank expression of their convictions and determinations, to operate upon what they still hope exists—the spirit of patriotism and fraternity—which, in times gone by, animated and governed their fathers, when, united by one constitution, and marching to a glorious destiny under one banner, they founded the Republic. This is the length and breadth and depth of all the proceedings of the people of Mississippi. Under such circumstances, therefore, they may well scorn the denunciations of those who impugn their motives. They may well rely for their justification against charges of disloyalty to the Union, on the proofs they have heretofore given, and those they are ready hereafter to give, whenever their country may need them, of their devoted attachment to the glory and interests, and their faithful adherence to the constitution of the United States. Well may they rely securely upon the purity of their motives, the justice of their demands, and the final judgment of mankind, for a refutation of the charges of those who have attempted to defame them. It is true that the hope and confidence in

the justice of the sense of the people of Mississippi, I have upon the necessity of no one that the of abandonment, in the disappointment of Mr. President upon the fellow-citizen settlement, distrust it. favor of immediate the reliance to disposed to post that it will be not one of those well founded. will not be done other promptings we shall have no offered to us for claim to California future harassment ly be given. The have seen, I fear was tion of the storm. If have been first to hope, to trust in compromise the first to sound the alarm again approaches. There reckless and self-sustaining trample upon her rights, if the al equality of the States is to be by force, private and political born down by forces of numbers, when that victory over constitutional is achieved, the shout of triumph which announces it, before it is half uttered, will be checked by the united, the determined action of the South, and every breeze will bring to the marauding destroyers of those rights the warning, Wee, wee to the riders who trample them down! I submit the report and resolutions, and ask that they may be read and printed for the use of the Senate.

Correspondence of the Yazoo Democrat.
THE NASHVILLE CONVENTION.

NASHVILLE, May 3, 1850.

Dear Sir: The Southern Convention has met; & the prophets of evil amongst us—the cravens that have been croaking so loud and so long about the Hartford Convention and nullification, the "natural allies of the North" as they may with truth be called—will, after all, be disappointed of the failure they foretold, and foretelling, endeavored to create. Nine States are already represented here, and delegates from the tenth (Florida) are known to be en route for this place.

A most august and imposing assemblage it is, bringing to mind the pictures drawn by Livy of the appearance of the assembled Senate of ancient Rome. Here is the venerable Cheves; bending under the weight of years; but with a mind still beaming with the effulgence of noon-day—Hammond, from the same State, polished, well read, epigrammatic, and always to the point. Then there are Tucker and Gordon from Virginia. Worthies of note and mark from Georgia and Alabama; and indeed, illustrious and distinguished names from every State that is represented. The people seem to have been especially careful to send their aged and honorable characters from private life—men who have graced, in the time, the highest positions, but now repose in their dignity of retirement, men who have put off the politician and put on the citizen, and who breathe an entire devotion to country worthy the days of Publicola or Cato.

If I had time to take you through the galaxy of patriots, you would recognize among them, our own Chief Justice, who already receives here, and merits the highest consideration and respect. He will probably be the President of the Convention, who is to be nominated in an hour, by a committee consisting of two from each State.

There will be no violence either of council or language in the Nashville Convention. This I venture confidently to predict, from the appearance and bearing of the delegates. Indeed the country is not prepared for a measure of extremity and we know it. The South is like a child, basking in the Sun, on the slope of a volcano, and rather amused than terrified at the muttering thunders beneath. When she awakes from her sleep, it will be with an explosion which will shake this continent. No hing short of the out-pouring of the lava can convince her that he is in danger; and when alas! she attempts to escape from it, I fear it will have been too long deferred, and that the effort will be abortive and vain.

Yours &c. E. C. W.

The Grand Jury of the United States Circuit Court, in New York City, instituted investigations as to the hostile invasion of Cuba, but could not find evidence enough to authorize the indictment of any person.

Before any thing is effected we think it impossible, but when it is done, we stare and wonder that it was not done before.

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4. Resolved, That the duty of the federal government is to make early provision for the maintenance of those laws, precedent and necessary to the inhabitants of and the territories the full constitutional rights were existing in the United States. The federal government has the powers of war, and sustaining arms, prohibited to States, and the exercise of the same, no discrimination be afforded or the right to be defended to the federal government. Whatever the State party the federal government to recognize and Therefore it is the duty of the federal government which tend to the constitution and or that discriminate in efficiency of the protection to it or which wear the title of any citizen of the territories are plain and violations of the fundamental which it exists.

5. Resolved, That the States can not and will not the enactment by Congress imposing onerous condition upon the rights of masters to with their property into the territories of the United States, or to any lawing discriminations in favor of proprietors of other property against them.

6. Resolved, That it is the duty of the federal government plainly to recognize and firmly to maintain the equal rights of the citizens of the several States in the territories of the United States, and to exercise the power to make a discrimination between the proprietors of different species of property in federal legislation. The fulfillment of this duty by the federal government, would greatly tend to restore the peace of the country and to allay the exasperation and excitement which now exist between the different sections of the Union. For it is the deliberate opinion of this Convention that the tolerance Congress has given to the notion that federal authority might be employed incidentally and indirectly to subvert or weaken the institutions existing in the States, confessedly beyond federal jurisdiction and control, is a main cause of the discord which menaces the existence of the Union, and which has well might destroyed the efficient action of the federal government itself.

7. Resolved, That the performance of this duty is required by the fundamental law of the Union. The equality of the people of the several States composing the Union cannot be disturbed without disturbing the frame of the American institutions. This principle is violated in the denial of the citizens of the slaveholding States of power to enter into the territories with the property lawfully acquired in the States. The

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT has appointed Barnwell, Sr. of Colonel Barnwell was named on the one of the Delegates. Mr. Barnwell is a gentleman of high distinguished talent, member of Congress, and for several years the College of South Carolina.

MEAT is like the criminal's cheek, for the more to conceal it, the more discreet